

# Crossing borders in agricultural education

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**Synergies within Nordic-Baltic agricultural education reinforce the cooperative environment between the two regions. After having met in Lithuania last year, coordinators of the networks NOVA and BOVA decided on a continued common effort to build international education in the field of agriculture and life sciences.**

‘The development of new courses increases the quality and generates new arenas for academic cooperation for the universities that are participating,’ secretary of the BOVA University (The Baltic Forestry, Veterinary and Agricultural Network), Ruta Zaleckita.

## Encouraging joint study programmes

In August 2009, 40 representatives from the NOVA/BOVA network met at the Lithuanian Veterinary Academy in Kaunas to discuss the development of joint international education within agriculture and life sciences.

‘Altogether a fruitful seminar where we agreed upon recommendations for the future NOVA/BOVA cooperation,’ Zaleckita says.

The main aim of the seminar was to examine possibilities and needs for international education on Master’s level within agriculture, forestry, veterinary science and life sciences. According to Zaleckita, they encourage the further development of joint courses that might, in the long run, lead to the development of joint study programmes. The network, consisting of 13 universities from the Nordic and Baltic region has already established a few joint intensive Master’s level courses.

The seminar highlighted the process from the initial idea to the evaluation of a joint course as essential for the development of the network as a whole. Zaleckita explains: ‘The process in itself is considered valuable as it generates new arenas for academic cooperation. Improvement in course quality is another possible bonus of this interaction, she says.

## From idea to sustainable production

Transfer of know-how and skills is seen as crucial for creating new high quality courses. The project managers of the successful joint initiative *Sustainable Pig Production* presented their course and shared experiences with the other participants. This project has been going on for a few years and has already received funding from Nordplus to continue their work.

Two parallel workshops were held at the seminar. Participants representing the administrative staff of the institutions were gathered to discuss strategies and practical issues related to the initiation and operation of inter-institutional courses. According to Zaleckita, it was agreed that the mutual interests for both NOVA and BOVA should be taken into account in the initiation of new courses, while at the same time keeping in mind the prioritised fields of Nordplus, such as climate

change.

In the wake of the seminar in Kaunas, the conclusion is that the two networks will continue their common effort to build international education in the field of agriculture and life sciences.



Yes